

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend claims 1-2, 14, 77 and 82 and cancel claims 10, 76 and 78-81 without prejudice to renewal. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 1 (currently amended): An isolated nucleic acid encoding an ATP-binding
2 cassette (ABC) family sterol transporter polypeptide, said polypeptide comprising an amino acid
3 sequence that is at least [[75%]] 95% identical to the full-length of an amino acid sequence as set
4 forth in SEQ ID NO:3, wherein said nucleic acid hybridizes under stringent hybridization
5 conditions comprising 50% formamide, 5x SSC, 1% SDS at 65°C and wash conditions of 0.2x
6 SSC, 0.1% SDS at 65°C to a nucleic acid comprising a nucleotide sequence as set forth in
7 SEQ ID NO:4, and wherein said amino acid sequence comprises an ATP-binding cassette (ABC)
8 family sterol transporter.

1 2 (currently amended): The nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein said polypeptide
2 specifically binds to ~~polyclonal~~ monoclonal antibodies generated against a polypeptide that
3 comprises an amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:3.

1 3 (previously presented): The nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein said polypeptide
2 comprises an amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:3.

1 4 (original): The nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein said polypeptide forms a dimer
2 with a second ABC polypeptide, and wherein said dimer exhibits sterol transport activity.

1 5 (original): The nucleic acid of claim 4, wherein said dimer is a heterodimer.

1 6 (original): The nucleic acid of claim 4, wherein said sterol is cholesterol.

1 7 (previously presented): The nucleic acid of claim 5, wherein said second ABC
2 polypeptide is ATP-Binding Cassette 8 (ABC8).

8-10 (canceled)

1 11 (previously presented): The nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein said nucleic acid
2 comprises a nucleotide sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:4.

12 (canceled)

1 13 (original): The nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein said nucleic acid is from a
2 mouse or a human.

1 14 (currently amended): The nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein said nucleic acid is
2 expressed in the intestine or in the liver in the presence of ~~an~~ a liver X receptor (LXR) agonist.

1 15 (original): The nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein said nucleic acid is expressed
2 in a tissue selected from the group consisting of liver, jejunum, ileum, and duodenum.

16 (canceled)

1 17 (original): An expression cassette comprising the nucleic acid of claim 1
2 operably linked to a promoter.

1 18 (original): An isolated cell comprising the expression cassette of claim 17.

19-30 (canceled)

1 31. (original) A method of making an SSG polypeptide, the method comprising:
2 (i) introducing a nucleic acid of claim 1 into a host cell or cellular extract; and
3 (ii) incubating said host cell or cellular extract under conditions such that said
4 SSG polypeptide is expressed in the host cell or cellular extract.

1 32. (original) The method of claim 31, further comprising recovering the SSG
2 polypeptide from the host cell or cellular extract.

33-76 (canceled)

1 77 (currently amended): ~~The nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein said amino acid~~
2 ~~sequence is at least about 95% identical to said amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:3~~
3 An isolated nucleic acid encoding an ATP-binding cassette (ABC) family sterol transporter
4 polypeptide, said polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence that is at least 95% identical to
5 the full-length of an amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:3, and wherein said amino
6 acid sequence comprises an ATP-binding cassette (ABC) family sterol transporter.

78-81 (canceled)

1 82 (currently amended): ~~The nucleic acid of claim 1~~ An isolated nucleic acid
2 encoding an ATP-binding cassette (ABC) family sterol transporter polypeptide, wherein said
3 nucleic acid comprises a nucleotide sequence at least 95% identical to the full-length of a
4 sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:4.

1 83 (previously presented): An isolated nucleic acid encoding an ATP-binding
2 cassette (ABC) family sterol transporter polypeptide, wherein said polypeptide comprises an
3 amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:3.

1 84 (previously presented): An isolated nucleic acid encoding an ATP-binding
2 cassette (ABC) family sterol transporter polypeptide, wherein said nucleic acid comprises a
3 nucleotide sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:4.